The larger level of imports trade deficit during the current year is on account of increase in bulk import such as fertilizers, sugar and POL as also increase in imports of capital goods and manufactured intermediates which are needed to maintain essential investment, production and consumption in the economy.

Import Bills on ONGC

2691. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the import bills of Oil and Natural Gas Commission, Dehradun had substantially increased during the last three years;

(b) whether the visits of Oil and Natural Gas Commission officials abroad had also increased manifold during the same period;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the details of imports of various items made during the last three years ending 30th June, 1985, the countries from which imported, the names of exporters and the value thereof;

(d) what was the total amount spent each year for the official tours along with the names of the countries visited by each official and the details of business done; and

(e) what kind of ancillary industries are proposed to be developed for reducing the import bills of the ONGC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Oil exploration in the Andamans offshore

2692. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pelased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Oil India Limited has decided to undertake oil exploration in the Andamans offshore areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the estimated cost of operation;

(c) whether the Oil India Ltd. has been permitted to import Oil Rigs and/or Drilling ships from abroad for that purpose;

(d) if so, which are the countries which have come forward to supply such equipments and on what terms; and

(e) whether any technical experts' committee has been constituted for the evaluation of each of such offers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI NAWAL KISHORE SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Oil India Limited plans to drill three erplorator wells, estimated to cost about Rs. 62 crores in the Andamian offshore during the VII Plan period. The drilling is expected to commence by April, 1986.

(c) and (d) The drilling is proposed to be done through a charter-hired drill ship. Offers have been received from firms in Japan, U.S.A., U.K. Belgium and Netherlands for drilling on a day-rate basis.

(e) Yes, Sir.

Applications for manufacture of passenger cars

2693. SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that number of applications for industrial licences and/or COB licences are pending with Government for the manufacture of passenger cars with and without foreign collaborations;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the names of the applicants and their collaborators or otherwise, since when the